

**Corporate Social Responsibility in an Untouched Market:**  
Exploring the Identity-CSR fit for the B2B Media Industry

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## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN AN UNTOUCHED MARKET

### ABSTRACT

*Corporate social responsibility is a concept that has been embraced by many industries over the past decennia. However, the media industry remains one of the least involved industries in terms of CSR. The media industry is characterized by efficiency and a problem-solving attitude. This research set out to find how the B2B media industry may incorporate CSR efforts, while not losing sight of the industry's identity. The research questions for this research is thus, 'what determines a good fit between CSR strategies and corporate identity of B2B companies in the media industry?'. To answer this question, the research took a qualitative approach, by making use of in-depth interviews and applying an ethnographic aspect. The interviews were conducted with employees and clients of a single facilitatory company that operates within the European media industry. The research found that on both the individual and corporate level, two groups of people can be distinguished: those in favor of implementing CSR efforts, and those who consider it a waste when implemented within the industry. However, CSR enforcement is driven by a top-down demand, that is currently barely present: merely a handful of clients consider CSR important, while most other clients do not consider it relevant for the industry at all. This perception goes hand in hand with the decrease in production budgets that has taken place over the past few years: there simply is no financial room for sustainable innovation. The only exception to this, is when the innovation provides more, often economic, benefits for the production. Yet, it seems that without further incentives for clients at the beginning of the value chain of TV production, the top-down demand for, and thus the implementation of CSR practices will not increase any time soon. The research findings imply that a good fit between CSR strategies and the corporate identity for the media industry are determined by its business practice and a will to adapt. However, it is also determined by its economic performance and business model, which is currently halting the development of CSR strategies.*

**KEYWORDS:** CSR, Media Industry, B2B, Corporate Identity, Broadcasters

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## 1. Introduction

The way business is done has rapidly changed over the past number of years, and due to, among other factors, globalization, private business and nation-state governance are no longer strictly separated (Scherer & Palazzo, 2011). The idea of corporate social responsibility (CSR) started growing in the minds of businesses in the 1950s, and has rapidly taken off since the 1990s (Elkington, 1994); rather than merely concerning themselves with profit, more and more companies started to think in terms of the triple bottom line, or '3Ps': people, planet, profit (Elkington, 2004). Nowadays, CSR activities and its correlating communication are considered a method of legitimizing a company in the eyes of society (Capriotti & Moreno, 2007; Deegan, 2002). CSR is therefore often times used as a marketing tool. However, recently consumer skepticism towards CSR communication has grown, and companies need to tread carefully when communicating their efforts in order to come across genuine, and not self-promotional (Jahdi & Acikdilli, 2009; Kim & Ferguson, 2014). But if communicated well, CSR initiatives can in fact be a good tool, that will not only help build stakeholder awareness of a company, but potentially also build a good relationship with the stakeholders such as customers and employees (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004; Chaudhri, 2014; Verboven, 2011). In other words, CSR initiatives, and the communication thereof, can be a good tool for companies for communicating their brand identity to their stakeholders.

However, "stakeholders' unfavorable attributions towards companies' CSR activities remain critical impediments in companies' attempts to maximize business benefits from their CSR activities" (Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2010, p. 8), and thus critical reflection on CSR communication is vital. One important element of CSR communication is the 'CSR fit', or the congruity between, on one side, the company's corporate identity, and on the other, the intrinsic motivation of the company's CSR initiatives (Du et al., 2010; Trimble & Rifon, 2006). Previous research has consistently confirmed "that the greater the consumer's perception of compatibility, the more positive the effects of the tactic on consumer response" (Trimble & Rifon, 2006, p. 31).

Thus, to develop an authentic and distinctive CSR strategy, it is important to first understand a company's corporate identity. Only if there is a high perceived fit between the CSR initiatives and the company's corporate identity, the more positive effects the initiatives will yield. Organizational identity can be described as "the reality and uniqueness of an organization

which is integrally related to its external and internal image and reputation through corporate communication” (Balmer & Gray, 1999, p. 171). Van Riel and Balmer define corporate identity in terms of three elements, namely behaviors, communications and symbolism (1997). Corporate identity can also be understood in terms organization’s members’ understanding of how their organization differs from competitors (Ravasi, 2016).

Most of the research into CSR is focused on the business-to-customer (B2C) sector. After all, CSR is commonly used as a marketing tool towards customers. However, business-to-business (B2B) companies are slowly adopting CSR initiatives as well, in an attempt to differentiate themselves from their competitors (Homburg, Stierl, & Bornemann, 2013; Kubenka & Myskova, 2009). For example, the chemical industry, although a B2B sector, has started incorporating CSR values into their mission slogans, often to change their industry’s image (Verboven, 2011). However, overall there has been very little research into B2B companies CSR efforts and its results. Only recently, an exploratory research into CSR communication in the B2B sector was done (Bemelman, 2015). Thus, there clearly is an academic gap in research into CSR efforts from within the B2B sector. This research intends to fill this gap, by researching how B2B companies can effectively partake in CSR strategies.

Despite the fact that CSR has become more and more demanded by stakeholders worldwide (McWilliams, Siegel, & Wright, 2006), the media industry seems to have evaded this stakeholder demand up until now. Reportedly, only 6% of media and entertainment companies fully address their significant social issues, and only 3% of media and entertainment companies address their significant environmental issues. With industries overall averaging 11% and 13% in social and environmental issues, respectively, the media and entertainment sector is one of the least involved industries (MIT Sloan Management Review, 2013). Media companies that do partake in CSR activities are B2C media companies, such as TV channels (Hasan, 2014). This research will be one of the first to take a closer look at how B2B media companies can find a good fit of CSR with their corporate identity.

To address the gap in literature, this study intends to examine how a CSR strategy can fit a B2B media company, and what the deterministic factors are. Accordingly, our research question is, *what determines a good fit between CSR strategies and corporate identity of B2B companies in the media industry?* In order to answer this research question, a set of sub-

questions are proposed:

- What are the expectations of B2B media companies' clients with respect to CSR engagement?
- What are the determinants of the corporate identity for B2B media companies?
- How can B2B media companies best align CSR engagement with their corporate identity?

In order to answer these questions, this research shall take a micro socioeconomic perspective, and analyze these topics from within a single B2B media company. This company is one of the largest facilitating media companies in Europe, whose name shall not be revealed due to confidentiality between the company and the researcher. This company provides facilities in terms of studios, equipment and personnel to other, content creating media companies. By means of in-depth interviews with both clients as well as employees, we will try to establish what the CSR expectations and corporate identity perceptions are of these stakeholder groups.

Moreover, this research will hold a strong element of societal relevance as well: besides the fact that CSR is currently one of the most important business aspects within society (Scherer & Palazzo, 2011), our research also tries to unfold the reason why media companies, although CSR watchdogs themselves (Chaudhri, 2014), do not partake in CSR efforts. Hopefully, this research will provide some answers to the question how media companies can also engage in CSR initiatives effectively.



## **2. Theoretical Framework**

### **2.1 A Brief History of CSR**

The concept of corporate social responsibility is enormously widespread, and can be interpreted in many different ways. To gain a better understanding of the concept, it is best to analyze the conception of the term in its early days, and the evolution of the concept throughout time.

The idea of ‘business responsibility’ emerged after the Second World War, and its first academic mentions are recorded in the ‘50s: Bernard Dempsey wrote the article ‘The Roots of Business Responsibility’ for the Harvard Business Review in 1949, and two months later Donald K. David, dean of Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration, wrote the article ‘Business Responsibilities in an Uncertain World’. Both authors argue in favor of the need for social justice, and suggest two reasons for companies why they should conduct business ‘responsibly’: all businesses live in a community that needs to flourish for the company to function well, and due to the substantial resources they have, businesses can greatly influence the progress of this community. Thus, they argued that business leaders have a fundamental obligation to create a responsible business society. But what business responsibility exactly entails, that they left for future debate (Farcane & Bureana, 2015).

In 1953, Howard R. Bowen coined one of the first definition of CSR, writing that “CSR refers to the obligation of businessmen to follow those policies, take those decisions or follow those action lines that are desired by the objectives and values of our society” (Bowen, 1953, as quoted in Farcane & Bureana, 2015, p. 36). A Forbes survey pointed out that, at that time, this definition was approved by more than 90% of the businessmen, and in part because of this definition, Archie B. Carroll considered Bowen the father of CSR (Farcane & Bureana, 2015).

However, in 1991, Carroll presented his own conceptual model of CSR in the form of the pyramid of corporate social responsibility, and this pyramid would go on to be considered the mainstream definition of CSR for a good number of years. The pyramid consists of four components, in which the basic building block is economic responsibilities. This block assumes that, for a company, economic performance is the most fundamental and important element. The second block is legal responsibilities, as a company is also expected to obey the law of a society. Thirdly, ethical responsibilities represent the notion that a business has a responsibility to do

what is right and fair, and to avoid harm to stakeholders. Finally, the top block consists of philanthropic responsibilities, which focuses on businesses being good ‘corporate citizens’. This entails the expectation “to contribute financial and human resources to the community and to improve the quality of life” (Carroll, 1991, p.42). Carroll considered CSR to be simultaneous fulfillment of a firm’s four pyramid building blocks, in which a firm should not only make a profit, but also obey the law, perform business ethically, and to be a good corporate citizen at the same time.

In 1994, Elkington noticed that stakeholders demanded more and more from companies that they should ‘go green’, or simply a demand for environmental sustainability, and suggested that companies should work together with sustainability organizations (Elkington, 1994). He also noted that the hardest part would be for companies to co-operate with its suppliers, customers and other stakeholders to figure out new ways of doing business. A few years later, Elkington reflects on nearly a decade of ‘fighting for green’, and his achievement of introducing a more economical approach to CSR with his triple bottom line (2004), with which he argues that businesses should not only measure their value in terms of profit, but also take into account social challenges and environmental issues in which the business can directly or indirectly exert power. Interchangeable with the triple bottom line, is the 3P formulation of ‘people, planet and profit’, which was even taken over by Shell for its first CSR report in 1997 (Elkington, 2004). But in the early days of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Elkington notices that CSR, rather than simply economic implications for the bottom line, has set in motion a cultural revolution that is changing business paradigms completely. He notices seven aspects of business that are rapidly changing as a result of a cultural shift. Among others, he notices that transparency – the idea that companies need to be transparent in their business activities, and that their business thinking and doing is more and more scrutinized by a growing public – is growing in importance, corporate governance is becoming more inclusive of more shareholders and stakeholders, and that hard values are making place for the appreciation of soft values (Elkington, 2004).

Scherer and Palazzo (2011) argue that CSR has changed even more since then; as the world has become more and more globalized in the past decade, an erosion of the division of labor between business and government can be observed. Businesses have, often under the political pressure of NGOs and societal demand, recently taken on a more political role, which

“goes beyond mere compliance with legal standards and conformity with moral rules” (Scherer & Palazzo, 2011, p. 906). Private business and nation-state governance are no longer strictly separated, and Scherer and Palazzo argue that CSR nowadays must be understood in a larger context of problem-solving potential by non-political actors (2011).

History shows that the concept of CSR has evolved and taken on different forms over time. Its definition is still highly debated, and academics and practitioners cannot agree on a single definition. However, one of the more contemporary definitions focuses on strategic CSR, which is a type of CSR that focuses on providing business benefits to the company, by being a good corporate citizen (Bhattacharyya, Sahay, Arora, & Chaturvedi, 2008). Good strategic CSR is when a company finds a fit between the qualities of a chosen CSR initiative and the company’s corporate identity (Porter & Kramer, 2002). Previous research has consistently confirmed “that the greater the consumer’s perception of compatibility, the more positive the effects of the tactic on consumer response” (Trimble & Rifon, 2006, p. 31). In other words, strategic CSR focuses on finding a congruity between the company’s corporate identity and the cause of the company’s CSR initiatives (Du et al., 2010; Trimble & Rifon, 2006).

## **2.2 Corporate Identity**

In order to create effective strategic CSR initiatives, understanding a company’s corporate identity is key. Organizational identity can be described as “the reality and uniqueness of an organization which is integrally related to its external and internal image and reputation through corporate communication” (Balmer & Gray, 1999, p. 171). A well-defined organizational identity can serve a number of purposes, such as motivating employees and creating trust among stakeholder groups (Melewar & Jenkins, 2002). The dimensions of the corporate identity construct used to be a heavily contested subject among both academics and practitioners, but a generally well-accepted definition is that of the corporate identity mix, as defined by Van Riel and Balmer (1997), as will be discussed below.

Although the exact definition of the concept *corporate identity* remains disputed, both practitioners and scholars agree that having a strong corporate identity may help distinguish an organization from its competitors, and give it a competitive advantage (Balmer & Gray, 1999;

Ravasi, 2016). Ravasi (2016) lays out the different approaches scholars have taken towards the concept of corporate identity. He notes that the corporate identity refers to the perceptions of two separate stakeholder groups, internal (e.g. employees) and external (e.g. clients), within which each individual holds his/her own perceptions of an organization's corporate identity.

An important element of the corporate identity is the organizational culture that it brings with it. The organizational culture consists of both ideational and material elements, referring to beliefs and assumptions, or simply 'the appropriate way to think and feel' within a company (Ravasi, 2016). These elements come from cultural forms within the company, such as symbols, traditions, language use, and stories, as well as from formal and informal practices such as policies and unspoken rules (Ravasi, 2016).

As these elements come together, they allow stakeholders to create a sense of corporate identity, or in other terms, how stakeholders develop and express their own place within this identity (Ravasi, 2016). The stakeholder's perception of corporate identity allows him to create understanding as to how an organization differs from its competitors (Ravasi, 2016). As a result, practitioners have built up a keen interest in corporate identity management. If the organizational perception of stakeholders can be influenced, managers can use this to their advantage (Balmer & Gray, 1999).

In the definition by Van Riel and Balmer, a company's corporate identity is defined by "the way in which an organization's identity is revealed through behaviour, communications, as well as through symbolism to internal and external audiences" (1997, p. 341). In simpler terms, Van Riel and Balmer argue that the corporate identity mix consists of three elements, namely behaviors, communications and symbolism. Melewar and Jenkins (2002) have defined the subconstructs of these three elements, where behavior consists of behavior by the three subgroups corporate, management and employee, while they define communications and symbolism in terms of corporate communications, uncontrollable communication, architecture and location, and corporate visual identity. Additionally, Melewar and Jenkins (2002) consider a fourth subgroup of corporate identity: market conditions. This subgroup focuses on the broader perspective of the market that an organization functions in, how a corporation uses marketing to distinguish itself from its competitors, and finally, how its competitors behave in the same market.

Overall, both Ravasi (2016) and Van Riel and Balmer (1997) agree that the corporate identity creates the basis of a company's personality. Through different types of symbols, behavior and communication, as defined by its corporate identity, a company can express its ideals and sentiments. As discussed earlier, the effects of CSR are the best when its qualities are aligned with a company's corporate identity. Thus, it is not enough for a company to simply engage in CSR, but rather, it also needs to align this engagement with its behavior and communication. When the congruity a company's CSR strategies fit well with its corporate identity, it then needs to be communicated well.

### **2.3 CSR Communication**

Although the definition of corporate identity remains disputed amongst researchers, they all agree that communication plays a vital role (Balmer & Gray, 1999; Ravasi, 2016; Van Riel & Balmer, 1997). Communication, both internal and external, helps stakeholders create an understanding of the identity of a company. Understanding how communicates relates to CSR is thus important for our research.

Many authors note the importance of good communication about a CSR initiative (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004; Chaudhri, 2014; Du et al., 2010; Kim & Ferguson, 2014). Engaging in CSR activities can indeed “generate favorable stakeholder attitudes and (...) over the long run, build corporate image, strengthen stakeholder-company relationships, and enhance stakeholders' advocacy behaviors” (Du et al., 2010, p. 8). However, stakeholders are often not aware of a company's CSR efforts, and if they are, the efforts are often greeted with a high level of skepticism. Du et al. therefore suggest that CSR communication serves two purposes: creating awareness and minimizing stakeholder skepticism (2010).

A number of academic articles offer suggestions on CSR communication, but Kim and Ferguson (2014) are one of the few who base their suggestions of empirical research. They found that consumers find it most important that companies share basic CSR information that is based on factual information and transparency, such as who the beneficiaries are, and what the specific results of the initiative were. They noted that publics do feel a strong sense of skepticism towards companies' CSR communication, and that by receiving specific information on who benefited

and what the CSR results were, they become more trusting of the communication.

Du et al. (2010) also created a framework of CSR communication, in which they defined three phases of CSR communication. The first is 'CSR communication' itself, the second are 'stakeholder characteristics', and the combination of the two results in the final phase of 'communication outcomes'. CSR communication can be divided into the two groups of 'message content' and 'message channel', noting a distinction in what is communicated to stakeholders, and how it is communicated, much like Kim and Ferguson (2014) have. The communication is affected during the second phase, by the contingency factors, which are divided into the two groups of 'stakeholder characteristics' and 'company characteristics'. If the communication is done well in the first phase, and influenced positively by contingency factors during the second, a company may experience positive internal and external outcomes (Du et al., 2010).

A good example of CSR and its communication put into practice is Marks and Spencer's *Plan A* program that was rolled out in 2007, setting out a hundred commitments to achieve in the first five years (CEBGlobal.com, 2017). In 2014 M&S rolled out *Plan A 2020*, an updated program with a hundred new challenges (Marksandspencer.com, 2017). The innovative aspect of this CSR approach is that it engages multiple stakeholders; employees, customers and suppliers are all enticed to participate in different ways. Within the organization, *Plan A* was incorporated in a formalized structure to ensure employee engagement. For example, employees' job descriptions contain elements of *Plan A*, as well as for store's business plans and manager's bonuses. The internal communication of the CSR is clearly communicated to the employees, ensuring a good understanding of the CSR goals set out by the head office.

Unilever is another company that has an interesting take on CSR communication: with its *Heroes* program, an employee can nominate another colleague for going the extra mile in his or her job (CEBGlobal.com). The most inspiring of these are selected and turned into video case studies, that are then published and shared both within the company, as well as externally with the customer shareholder group through YouTube and Facebook (Unilever.com, 2017). These videos show the 'heroes' in their work environment, their idea and implementation, and the change that they have made, clearly showing the fit of the CSR initiative with the corporate identity.

Both examples show elements of the points brought forward by Kim and Ferguson (2014)

and Du et al. (2010), as both focus on the message content and the message channel. Marks and Spencer makes sure the employees know what the CSR expectations of the company are and how they can meet them, and the company uses different channels within a formalized structure to communicate so. Unilever uses inspirational internal stories to communicate externally, using popular media channels.

However, these companies are business-to-consumer companies (B2C), which is also the type of market that the abovementioned articles (Du et al., 2010; Kim & Ferguson, 2014) focus on. There is a clear gap in literature here, as there is little to no focus on CSR in B2B markets. However, potentially, some of the CSR communication elements that have been put forward for B2C companies, may also apply to B2B companies, where consumers are extended to clients.

## **2.4 Business-to-Business Market**

In business theory and practice, a distinction can be made between two types of business, that of B2B and B2C. B2C companies focus on the retail of services and products destined for (mass) consumption by the end user. B2B companies, however, center their activities around products and services for other companies (Capriotti, 2009). Depending on the type of business, a business has different types of customers. In general, consumers are more emotional in their decision making process, whereas B2B customers, or clients, tend to be more rational when making decisions (Beverland et al., 2007; Kahneman, 2013). Yet despite this rational decision making process, Beverland et al. argue that B2B customers rely strongly on a company's brand image (2007). They suggest that brand image consists of five components, *product*, *service*, *logistics*, *advice*, and *adaptation*, where the latter two are often the most unique and determining. Competitors can easily imitate and equal a product, service, and its logistics, but the ability to adapt to the customer's complex needs, and the ability to have a two-way dialog, listen to and understand the customer's problems, and provide good advice are the key differentiators for a company's brand identity (Beverland et al., 2007).

Research suggests that a positive link exists between CSR initiatives and customer loyalty, if the client supports the issue that surrounds the company's CSR efforts, and when there is a high level of fit between the issue and the company (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004). Thus, it is

important for B2B companies to have this two-way dialog with their customers, in order to find out what issues they support.

This is supported by empirical research by Homburg et al. (2013), who found that CSR initiatives by B2B companies can raise clients' trust and identification, resulting in a higher level of customer loyalty. Moreover, they suggest that B2B companies should differentiate between business practice CSR and philanthropic CSR, where the former is focused on targeting stakeholders with whom the company has market exchange, and where the latter is focused on CSR practices addressing the community (Homburg et al., 2013). It must also be noted that business practice CSR will result in trust from the side of the clients, whereas philanthropic CSR will result in customer-company identification (Homburg et al., 2013).

Trust is an important factor for B2B companies participating in CSR initiatives; whereas Homburg et al. (2013) focused on raising the level of trust from the clients, Hoejmose, Brammer and Millington (2012) suggest that CSR can also raise the levels of trust amongst a company's suppliers. The CSR method they suggest is known as 'green supply chain management' (GSCM), or 'sustainable supply chain management' (SSCM). This form of supply chain management focuses on improving manufacturing conditions throughout an entire company's value chain in order to reduce the environmental, labor and social impacts of their business operations, or in simpler terms, to ensure that a company does not abuse a supplier's poor social position, but rather tries to help it grow (Turker & Altuntas, 2014). This form of CSR can commonly be observed in retail companies (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2006), but Hoejmose et al. (2012) argue that applying it in B2B companies may also result in positive outcomes.

CSR initiatives by B2B companies may also have positive economic effects. Fraj, Martínez and Matute (2013) found that implementing CSR values into the corporate identity may result in increased economic performance. They note a difference between market-oriented CSR practices and internally oriented CSR activities, remarking that the first may directly determine economic performance, while the latter may indirectly influence financial results. They explain that such an implementation of CSR may generally improve a company's environmental performance, which, consequently, contributes to cost reductions, operational improvements and organizational efficiency. This will eventually result in increased economic performances.

Thus, we can conclude that literature on CSR by B2B companies suggests that these



types of companies have a variety of different approaches to engage in CSR initiatives, each with different outcomes. However, research certainly does remain scarce, resulting in an academic gap on this topic. A gap that we intend to help close, by analyzing a distinct part of the B2B market: the B2B media industry.

## **2.5 The Media Industry**

Although more and more business practices worldwide have adapted CSR practices and policies, MIT Sloan Management Review (2013) reports that the media industry is one of the most lagged-behind performer in terms of CSR. And although the media and entertainment sector is one of the least involved industries, it is important to determine what exactly entails this industry.

The media industry has grown enormously in the past century. While a hundred years ago, newspapers and radio were the only media, technological development has expanded the definition of media industry to a much grander scale. As our research pertains to the media industry, it is imperative to have a clear definition of what this industry exactly entails. For our definition, we use the U.S. Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration's 2016 market report on the Media and Entertainment Industry. This report defines the industry consisting of four segments: Filmed Entertainment, Music, Video Games, and Publishing (International Trade Administration, 2016).

Within these segments, companies can be defined by their position on the production line, or the value chain: in order to produce a single media product, a number of different groups work on the production. Consider the segment Music, for example: as an artist writes a song, the record label hires the help of a production company, after which a promoter is hired to oversee marketing, and eventually the song is sold to customers by a distributor. In this case, only the distributor (e.g. Spotify or a record shop) is a B2C company. This highlights the importance of B2B companies in the media industry.

Very little research has been done into CSR and media companies, and the research that does, only focuses on B2C companies (Hasan, 2014; Hou & Reber, 2011). Popular literature shows the same findings: only B2C media companies participate in CSR initiatives. However,

interestingly, in December 2016, seventeen companies working from the Dutch Media Campus (Mediapark) co-signed an agreement stating that they will buy 70% of their electricity consumption from a sustainable energy provider (Mediagroen.nl, 2016). In this case, sustainable energy is energy that is generated through sustainable means, such as solar panels or wind turbines. This is an example of an indirect strategic CSR initiative, where a company participates in CSR practices performed by an external party, yet using the recognition it brings along in a marketing effective manner. However, though this may be indirect strategic CSR, it does show that in the media industry an intent for CSR strategies is developing.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Research Design

In order to answer our research question and sub-questions, our research adopted a micro socioeconomic perspective: the research focused on a single B2B media company, one of the largest facilitatory media companies in Europe, whose name shall not be revealed due to confidentiality. This specific company is a good example of a B2B media company, as it provides studios, equipment and personnel to other media companies. In order to answer the research question, we have conducted a qualitative research by means of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with two important stakeholder groups, employees and clients. Additionally, this research has applied an ethnographic approach, as the researchers spent two months working at the company.

As there is little research on CSR by B2B or by media companies, let alone on CSR by B2B media companies, a qualitative approach is arguably the best method for this research. In order to understand how media companies can find a good fit of CSR with their corporate identity, we must first understand the corporate identity of the media company in question. Moreover, as the corporate identity is related to stakeholders' perceptions and expectations of a company's behavior and communication, we must understand what perceptions and expectations these stakeholders have. A qualitative approach allows researchers to not just gather data on, but also give meaning to topics such as organizational functioning and a person's feelings, opinions and perceptions (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Qualitative research may yield rich descriptions of, and give meaning to social settings and phenomena (Silverman, 2001), and semi-structured interviews specifically allow the researcher to delve deeper into social and personal matters (DiCocco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Using this approach, we may gather a better understanding of the company's corporate identity, stakeholders' perceptions and expectations, and how these may fit with CSR initiatives.

Although this research applied a thematic analysis, it also applied some principles of the *grounded theory* approach, as laid out by Strauss and Corbin (1990). This approach suggests researchers not to start their research with a predetermined theory in mind, but rather to allow the theory to emerge from the collected data, as theory derived from data ought to bear a closer

resemblance to reality (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). However, this research rather applied a form of grounded theory ‘lite’, as the data was interpreted with an extensive literature review in mind (Miles, 1979), and as the research is not directed towards theory development (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

### **3.2 Sampling**

For this research, fifteen company employees, and five clients were interviewed. The employees are purposefully selected on the basis of their department and level within the company; we aimed to cover a wide variety of department and levels, as to gain a better understanding of the internal corporate identity as a whole. Based on the company structure, a division has been made of how many people from which department were interviewed. The employees are divided by their respective departments and the tier to which they belong within the company. This division may be found in table 1. The clients were also purposefully selected, however, this selection was based on availability and willingness to cooperate.

The interviews with the employees were mostly directed at gaining an understanding of the company’s corporate identity. It also intended to uncover if employees have CSR expectations, and what they then are. However, less focus was put on the latter during the employee interviews. For the client interviews, we focused more on their CSR expectations, and less on their perceptions of the company’s corporate identity.

The choice for a 15/3 ratio, was made due to the complexity of the concept of corporate identity. As our theoretical framework shows, there is not a single understanding of this concept, rather multiple definitions exist. Even though we have narrowed the concept down to a specific set of understandings, it still consists of many sub-concepts, which all require thorough research. Thus, before we can conceptualize the company’s corporate identity, we need to collect a substantial amount of data from multiple sources, in order to gain a good understanding of how this concept is constructed by the stakeholders. Therefore, more data needs to be collected, and thus relatively more interviews are required, for the concept of corporate identity, compared to understanding the CSR expectations concept.

As this research is done in cooperation with the company that was studied, a company

representative from the HR department approached all the participants. The initial approach contained a brief explanation of the research and research method, and asked for their cooperation to be interviewed. After initial approach by the company representative, the researcher contacted each participant and made an appointment to hold the interview. The participants were approached during the last week of February and the first week of March. The interviews with the employees were held during the period of 9<sup>th</sup> until 23<sup>rd</sup> of March. The interviews with the clients were held approximately four weeks later, in the last week of April.

*Table I: Overview of participants*

| <i>Name</i> | <i>Department</i> | <i>Tier</i> | <i>Gender</i> | <i>Age</i> |
|-------------|-------------------|-------------|---------------|------------|
| Employee 1  | Management        | Higher      | Male          | 51         |
| Employee 2  | Deputy director   | Higher      | Male          | 45         |
| Employee 3  | Deputy director   | Higher      | Male          | 51         |
| Employee 4  | Deputy director   | Higher      | Male          | 46         |
| Employee 5  | Deputy director   | Higher      | Male          | 54         |
| Employee 6  | Sales             | Middle      | Male          | 47         |
| Employee 7  | Finance           | Middle      | Male          | 39         |
| Employee 8  | Human resources   | Middle      | Female        | 50         |
| Employee 9  | Logistics         | Lower       | Male          | 46         |
| Employee 10 | Logistics         | Lower       | Male          | 45         |
| Employee 11 | Other             | Middle      | Male          | 42         |
| Employee 12 | Other             | Lower       | Male          | 57         |
| Employee 13 | Other             | Lower       | Male          | 54         |
| Employee 14 | Other             | Middle      | Male          | 44         |
| Employee 15 | Other             | Lower       | Male          | 53         |
| Client 1    | Commercial        | n/a         | Male          | n/a        |
| Client 2    | Public            | n/a         | Female        | n/a        |
| Client 3    | Public            | n/a         | Male          | n/a        |

### 3.3 Measuring Instrument

In-depth interviews are characterized by the combination of both structure and flexibility, and semi-structured interviews specifically, intend to find the best balance between those two (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). A researcher who uses such a type of interview will have a set of topics in mind, that, based on the theoretical framework and the research questions, need to be covered during the interview. The element of structure comes in the form of a topic guide, which is a pre-produced list of topics, questions, and probes, that is used during the interview. As the name suggests, the topic guide serves as a guide during the interview, allowing the researcher to check which topics have been discussed, and which still need to be addressed.

Based on the theoretical framework for this research, our topic guide mainly addresses the two broader topics of corporate identity and CSR. Both these topics are split into several subtopics, which each have a section of question related to them. The corporate identity subtopics are based on the works of Ravasi (2016), Van Riel and Balmer (1997), and Melewar and Jenkins (2002), as discussed in the theoretical framework. These focus on aspects such as *communication and visual identity*, *market conditions*, and *corporate culture*.

The questions on CSR are based on the works of Bhattacharya and Sen (2004), Chaudhri, (2014), Du et al. (2010) and Kim and Ferguson (2014), focusing on the topics of *CSR initiatives*, *CSR communication*, and *CSR reputation*.

The topic guide opens with an introduction in which the research and its intentions are explained. This is also when the participant's rights are explained, consent for audio recording the interview is asked, and the consent form is signed. The interview starts off with a number of general questions about the participant, his/her position, and how he/she views the company and the industry. The interview ends with a number of general questions concerning recommendations towards the company. See Appendix A for a copy of the interview guide.

### 3.4 Operationalization

After the interviews are done, they were transcribed, providing data in the form of text. Initially, the data was analyzed by means of a digital text analysis, which provided us with a number of preliminary ‘themes’, as exemplified in the research by Ryan Light (2014). For this step of the analysis, the data was analyzed using the software *ConText*, applying the ‘topic modeling’ function to discover initial themes.

However, our main form of analysis is a thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method of identifying and analyzing data, and can help researchers move their analysis from a broad reading of the data towards discovering patterns and developing themes (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006). Applying a thematic analysis, we worked with a coding procedure laid out by Strauss and Corbin (1990); we coded the data in a three-step process, which consists of the *open*, *axial* and *selective* coding phases. During the open coding phase, the data is examined, compared, and categorized, while in the axial coding phase, the open codes are compared and categorized together under new codes, which represent overarching, larger categories. In the final step, the open codes are compared, their core ideas analyzed, and potential relationships between these are gathered under overarching themes. Or in simpler terms, describe, compare, relate (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Following this coding process allowed us to find both semantic as well as latent themes within the data. The thematic analysis was done with the help of the software *NVivo*, which allows the researcher to keep a clear overview of the coded material.

Once the thematic analysis yielded a number of themes, these were analyzed by means of their quantifiable prominence; the themes, or selective codes, that occur the most often, are the most important themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This is because of the inherent nature of qualitative research, where the themes are discovered in a ‘bottom up’ fashion (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Eventually, these themes were interpreted in the larger ideas presented and discussed in the theoretical framework.

Additionally, the found data was visualized using the software *Gephi*. This allowed us to visualize the open, axial and selective codes, and how these are related to each other. Although the thematic analysis is our main form of operationalization, the visualization provides an additional form of operationalization, providing us with another perspective of the data. This approach helps to make sense of how the themes, resulted from the thematic analysis, are

interlinked.

Furthermore, this research has developed a conceptual model which explains how different facets of the research tie in together. The conceptual model was developed throughout the results section, with each subsection concluding with an updated version of the model.

Finally, the researcher took on an additional ethnographic approach which helped in operationalizing the data. The researcher worked at the company for a period of eight weeks. This period is divided into two sections: the first four weeks, the researcher worked at the company internally as part of the research, while for the second four weeks, the researcher worked at the company as part of a consultancy project. The time spent there, the researcher got in touch with the company's culture and identity in a native way. This experience may help in better understanding the research findings.

### **3.5 Reliability and Validity**

Reliability and validity are the foundation of academic research, where reliability refers to idea that a research must be essentially repeatable; when another researcher redoes the same research, he should find the same results (Silverman, 2001). However, it is hard to apply the classic definition of reliability to the social sciences and qualitative research, as, in our case, we are measuring stakeholder perceptions, and perceptions tend to change over time (Silverman, 2001). In order to acquire a high degree of reliability, this research paper will describe the research process as transparent as possible. This will be achieved by thoroughly describing the data collection process and data analysis, and by attaching the research instrument in the Appendix.

Validity refers to the extent to which a research accurately measures what it intended to measure, and this too is often hard to measure in the qualitative social sciences. Merriam (1995) suggests a number of ways to strengthen the level of validity in qualitative data. First of all, this research will apply a form of triangulation, or the use of multiple sources of data to confirm emerging findings; as the researcher will hold many of the interviews at the company building itself, it may check if the findings correlate to what the researcher saw and experienced while there. Additionally, the researcher will apply member checks, by taking tentative interpretations of the data back to the participants, and inquire if the interpretations are plausible to them.



Finally, the researcher will provide a statement of his experiences, assumptions and potential biases, enabling “the reader to better understand how the data might have been interpreted” (Merriam, 1995, p. 55).

### 3.6 Coding Process

This section provides an overview of and an insight into the different steps of coding. The three operationalization methods are thoroughly explained, so that other researchers may follow the same steps.

After all the interviews were transcribed, we could start with the topic modeling in *ConText*. In order to run the topic modeling method in this software properly, we had to first pre-process the text. This means that the text needs to be cleaned of stop and noise words, and the text needs to be combed for stemming. The latter means that, for example, the plural and the singular form of a word are combined into a single word.

The pre-processing was done by copying all the transcribed Word files into a text file in *Notepad*. As *ConText* cannot read apostrophes, we removed all apostrophes by using the ‘replace’ function. The second step was to load the file into *ConText*, and applying the ‘stemming’ and ‘remove stop words’ functions, which may be found under ‘text analysis’ → ‘preprocessing’. For the latter function, we used a Dutch stop word dictionary as provided by Dr. Jay Lee in the *Digital Research Methods* course. The resulting text file was then run through the ‘topic modeling’ function, found under ‘text analysis → ‘summarization’. This resulted in four distinguishable topics, which are discussed in the results section.

The next step in the coding process was to code the data according to the principles of thematic analysis. As explained in section 3.4, we applied the coding procedure as laid out by Strauss and Corbin (1990). This procedure was done with the use of the software *NVivo*. The Word files containing the transcribed data were loaded into *NVivo* as sources, resulting in 18 sources. The actual coding was done by opening a single source file within the program, carefully read the transcribed data, and code relevant sections. This is the open coding process. Codes within *NVivo* are called ‘nodes’. The open coding process resulted in 224 nodes.

For the axial coding process, all the open codes were compared with each other, and those that were similar or that belonged to a similar topic were grouped together under a new

node. One does this by creating a new node, and dragging and dropping existing (open) nodes onto the new node. Some open codes fell under more than one axial code. This process resulted in 26 axial codes. For the final process, selective coding, a similar method was applied: the different axial codes were compared and grouped where appropriate, which resulted in the final three selective codes. These three selective codes are the themes found within our data. These are discussed in chapter four, the results section. An example of the overview of codes from within *NVivo* may be found in Appendix C.

Our final operationalization method is visualizing the codes. Using the same *NVivo* file, we selected both the selective as well as the axial codes, and after clicking the right mouse button, we selected ‘Aggregate Coding from Child Nodes’. Then, still having selected the same codes, we exported them as separate plain text files (\*.txt). These files were then run through the *NVivo2Gephi* tool, as provided by Dr. Jay Lee in his Digital Research Methods course. This tool provides us with both the nodes file as well as the edges file required for *Gephi*.

Within *Gephi*, we imported the edges file as a new spreadsheet, after which the same was done with the nodes file. Afterwards, the codes were each given a specific weight, so the size of the nodes within the visualization may be larger. The selective, axial and open codes were each weighed 20, 5, and 1, respectively.

For the visualization itself, we applied a Force Atlas layout, with a repulsion strength of 4000 and an attraction strength of 10. The three selective codes were each colored according to one of the primary colors, with a diffusion setting set to neighbors. This allows the colors to flow over into one another, there where nodes are interconnected. Finally, the visualization was produced in ‘preview’. The resulting visualization may be found in section 4.4.

## **4. Results**

In this section, the results obtained from the qualitative interviews and the subsequent analyses will be discussed. This will be done according to the main themes identified in the thematic analysis using *NVivo*, which are ‘*Awareness of CSR*’, ‘*Corporate identity fit*’, and ‘*Advantages and challenges*’. Each theme is divided into sub-themes, which, together, provide an understanding of the larger, over-arching themes that they belong to. In order to protect the confidentiality of our participants, quotes will be referenced by mentioning the respective company tier of the source.

### **4.1 Topic Modeling**

Before performing the main thematic analysis in *NVivo*, we ran a topic modeling analysis in the software *ConText*. This analysis provided a computerized interpretation of the interview data in text form. Through its algorithm, a number of topics were found within the data. These topics require human interpretation to make sense of it. Our interpretation provided the following, preliminary topics: ‘*Company characteristics*’, ‘*Changing business*’, ‘*Brand image through employees*’, and finally ‘*Fast and experienced services*’. With these topics in the back of our mind, we ran the thematic analysis in *NVivo*, the results of which are discussed below. These preliminary topics corresponded somewhat to our main themes: all of the topics found from the topic modeling function could be placed in sub-sections of the themes, but did not represent the main themes. Within the relevant sub-sections, these topics shall be mentioned again.

### **4.2 Awareness of CSR**

The term CSR is a familiar one to our participants. During the interviews, all but one managed to explain properly what it stands for and represents, and no one had a problem vocalizing their opinion on the matter: participants can readily be divided in two groups, one being supportive of CSR, and the other completely against. When asked about CSR, the participants expressed explained CSR commonly in two ways: environmental sustainability and human sustainability. The participants would often measure these two elements based on their own company or the

industry that it belongs to. Additionally, they would often mention their competitor's CSR efforts. This section discusses these three elements.

#### *4.2.1 Environmental sustainability*

When CSR was discussed in the interview, interviewees would almost always mention environmental sustainability as the first thing that came to their minds. Environmental measures were considered in terms of paper use, use of gaffer tape, use and disposal of batteries, and lighting. Additionally, personal waste disposal and use of electric personal cars were considered.

As mentioned before, we noticed a strong divide amongst participants, where one group was strongly in favor of implementing environmentally friendly measures, while the other group strongly opposed this idea. Those in favor expressed that a change in mindset within the company and the industry is necessary. They expressed the belief that environmental awareness is normalizing and that active participation is becoming a norm. Due to this normalization, they also believe that the company has a responsibility to work as environmentally friendly as possible.

This group would often point out the steps that the company has already taken in becoming more environmentally friendly: trying to reduce paper use, switching to rechargeable electric batteries, and switching from incandescent light bulbs to LED lamps. Finally, this group often mentioned that they believe a change is required to ensure a good future for their children. Many expressed to want to leave a better world for the next generation.

The group of participants that were opposed to the idea of CSR within the company, were either in the belief that the company should have no responsibility whatsoever, or simply did not think that environmentally friendly measurements were important.

*“I’m not against the environment, haha. No, but, it’s not like it is something that I’m involved with on a daily basis. I don’t really care if I throw out a bottle or reuse it. No... I don’t think that it’s relevant for our business anyway.” – Middle tier employee*

As exemplified in the quote, this group would express that they do not believe environmentally friendly measurements are relevant for their business and industry. The same examples that the ‘in favor’ group used, were countered by the ‘against’ group with arguments

surrounding practicality: according to them, paper is easier to make notes on than tablets, electric batteries aren't reliable enough for filming, and the switch to LED lamps was mostly based on cost reduction in lighting.

Thus, it seems that a strong divide within the media industry is evident. One group calls on environmentally friendly measures based on it being a norm, while the other suggests that it has no place within the media industry. This divide is driven by, on one side, personal values and, on the other hand, a purely business-based rationale. The latter may be understood in terms of Carroll's (1991) conceptual model of CSR: this conceptual model suggests that a company's priorities can be visualized within a pyramid consisting of four building blocks. This model considers economic performance as its first and main building block. Legal responsibilities, ethical responsibilities and philanthropic responsibilities follow respectively. The group of employees that is opposed to implementing CSR efforts follow the same rationale as Carroll's model: to them it is most important that the company performs well financially, and they believe that the company's philanthropic (or sustainability) responsibilities come last. The only exception to this, is when the sustainability measures can actually aid the company's economic performance.

The group that does see a future in sustainability measures within the company, explained that they believe sustainability has become a norm. Unlike the opposing group, this group's beliefs are supported by a perceived norm. This notion is supported by research that suggests that an individual's attitude and a subjective norm are important factors in an individual's interpretation and application of environmental sustainability (Swaim, Maloni, Henley, & Campbell, 2016).

#### *4.2.2 Human sustainability*

A second element of CSR that was often mentioned, is that of human resources. Participants brought up the matters of employing women and minorities, and 'taking care' of your people.

Employees often brought up that they had to work overtime. However, this was never a complaint, rather, they believed this is what the media industry is like. They expressed the need for well thought out overtime plans, but also suggested that these are currently in place. Employees have accepted that working overtime is part of the media industry, and they will continue to accept this, as long as the company 'takes care' of them. This can be done by

scheduling employees in such a way, that an overtime day is not followed by an early shift. Additionally, employees expressed that they feel the company ‘gives back’ to them. This is expressed in the form of employees being able to borrow company equipment for personal use.

A second topic that was discussed, was the employment of both women and minorities. Through an ethnographic approach, the researcher found that only a small number of women were employed by the company, and even less people from a minority background. When this was discussed in the interviews, this was acknowledged and confirmed by the participants. However, they would point out they believe these aspects are irrelevant for the company’s business as hiring policies are merely based on personal qualities and skills.

*“We would actually like some women working here, but they barely respond [to job applications]. It’s a shame really, because I think that they’d have an advantage. An advantage because then we wouldn’t have an entire group of men. And women really provide something else: different insights, different tensions. [...] I hope that it changes.” – Lower tier employee*

The quote above illustrates how people view the lack of women active in the company. The same is said for employees with a minority background: having people with different cultural backgrounds in the workforce can enhance work performance. When asked why then, there are so few people of color at the company, the answer is that they are not opposed to hiring them, yet it seems that, much like women, they do not apply for jobs within this specific branch of the media industry. The participants believe that it is more of an institutionalized problem: women and people with a minority background do not seem to attend the schools and programs required for this industry.

Thus, human sustainability is an important element in terms of our participants’ CSR awareness. On the surface, they show a belief that the company is doing well in this aspect, but subliminally they wish for more diversity in the workforce. They believe that an increase of diversity may be beneficial for the company. Research has indeed shown that both gender and racial diversity in the workforce may have beneficial effects on a company’s performance both in terms of firm productivity (Richard, Kirby & Chadwick, 2013; Garner, Kampelmann, & Rycx, 2014) as well as in terms of employee turnover (Nishii, 2012). Interestingly, the participants

believe that the company is not responsible for this lack of diversity, but rather believe it is an institutionalized issue within their industry. This is an interesting finding, as Hou and Reber (2011) show that diversity promotion is one of the few occurring CSR practices within the media industry, yet it seems that within this company, this is not the case.

#### 4.2.3 *Competition's CSR*

Finally, awareness of CSR was often discussed in terms of what the competitors have been doing. The company's main competitor was the most widely discussed point. Our interviewees explained that the competitor took a 'green turn' a number of years ago. Both companies work extensively with large trucks (OB vans, satellite vans, transport trucks) that drive around Europe. The competitor has claimed that they no longer drive their trucks on diesel, but rather on Compressed Natural Gas (CNG).

*“And I know that they have a ‘green’ business. Or at least pretend to be green, by posting big stickers on the side of their trucks saying that they drive on Natural Gas. So, I know they do that, but that’s about it. But it’s nonsense.”*

*– Lower tier employee*

This quote illustrates how every employee of the company thought about their competitor's 'green operations': they believed its claims to be untrue and considered it greenwashing. Many participants spoke with disdain about this practice.

The interviewees that are clients of the company are also clients of this specific competitor. The clients were not as skeptical as the employees and did not outright refute the idea, like the employees did. However, they did express their bewilderment over how the competitor is able to run their trucks on CNG.

This finding is in line with Kim and Ferguson (2014), who found that stakeholders value CSR communication based on factual information and transparency the most. It seems that the lack of exactly these elements has resulted in little to no faith in the competitor's 'green' practice.

#### 4.2.4 *Theme summary*

This theme reveals the three ways that our participants interpret CSR. Most notably, participants would almost immediately think of environmental sustainability when asked about CSR,

however, human sustainability as well as their competitor's CSR efforts were often discussed.

Within the topic of environmental sustainability, a clear divide could be made out, where one group was in favor of implementing CSR efforts in the company, while the other group was vocally unsupportive. The first group explained their beliefs mostly to be a result of a personal attitude and a perceived existing sustainability norm. The latter group followed Carroll's (1991) conceptual model, suggesting that the company needs to prioritize its economic performance, rather than focus on CSR.

Human CSR was also considered by the participants, yet was considered not as important. A number of participants expressed their wish for more diversity in the workforce, but the same were also convinced the lack of diversity is an institutionalized issue within the industry and the education leading up to the industry.

Finally, CSR awareness was often discussed in terms of what the competitors had already done. However, these experiences were often negative, as participants suggested that the efforts communicated by their competitors were fake and only served a marketing purpose. These negative experiences with CSR efforts from within their industry aided in the 'against-group' being negative towards CSR: they viewed it as proof of CSR being useless within the media industry. Overall, CSR efforts within the media industry was largely viewed as not having any clear, direct benefits.

However, there have been some technological innovations within the industry that could also be considered as CSR efforts. These innovations were largely embraced by our respondents, but not because of their CSR value, but rather for the value these innovations add to the company's performance in its core business. CSR efforts through technical innovations could be actively used to stimulate a company's performance (Mariadoss, Tansuhaj, & Mouri, 2011), but the company is currently not pursuing a strategy that seeks to find a competitive advantage through CSR efforts through technical innovations. Rather the company is following its classic 'you ask, we deliver' strategy, which will be discussed in section 4.2. If it were to change or adapt its strategy to one more inclusive of CSR and technical innovations, its employees may see the value of CSR efforts more easily.



#### 4.2.5 Conceptual model

This first chapter reveals the conceptual model as seen in Figure 1.

This model shows that CSR awareness is mainly considered in two ways: environmental sustainability and human sustainability. CSR awareness is also considered in terms of what competitors have initiated. Competitors' CSR activities were always discussed in terms of environmental sustainability, which is why, in the concept model, one is linked to the other.

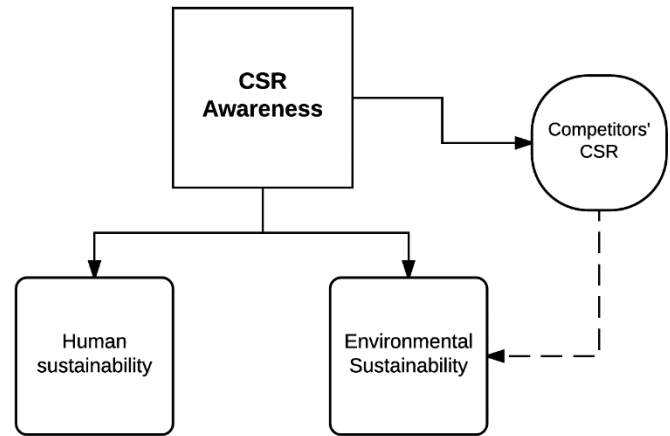


Figure 1: Conceptual model of CSR Awareness

### 4.3 Corporate Identity Fit

As explained in the theoretical framework, stakeholders' perception of the fit between a company's CSR efforts and the company's corporate identity is vital in how a company's efforts are eventually perceived by the stakeholder. This section discusses the findings related to the company's corporate identity and its fit with CSR efforts. It consists of multiple sub-themes that together make up the corporate identity. This theme consists of 'company identity', 'clients and competition', 'industry', and 'expectations'.

#### 4.3.1 Company identity

The company's identity was discussed in many different elements. The most frequently mentioned element, is the company's character. Its character is based on how our participants view the company that they work for and with. Three of the preliminary topics found by using the topic modeling function in *ConText* correspond to this sub-section: *company characteristics*, *brand image through employees*, and *fast and experienced services* are the three preliminary topics that correspond to this section, *company identity*.

The company is described as a dynamic, non-bureaucratic, problem-solving, multi-faceted company with a strong brand image characterized by flexibility, that serves the higher

segments of the industry. Over the years it has acquired many different companies. Some people still feel some of the remnants of these companies, yet, overall, it has managed to unify the different cultures of each of these. Its foundation is a small family company, that went on to become a medium-sized rebel that challenged the established order within the industry. In jargon terms, they were known as a ‘cowboy’, a group that works based on the premise of ‘wild and free’. However, as it grew in size, the company became less ‘cowboy’ and more “a company like a company should be” (Middle tier employee).

The company is known for its high-quality service and personnel. Its employees, especially those ‘on the work floor’, are considered the face of the company’s brand image. They represent an image of dedicated and hardworking people, that have a strong passion for the work that they do. The company works on a regular basis with freelancers, and a strong sense of group feeling among its employees makes the company attractive for outsiders; many freelancers would like to work for the company. Employees have to work long hours, but their motivation and dedication counterbalance this.

Another element of its character is the work environment, which is described as consisting of an approachable atmosphere, with a rather non-hierarchical, flat structure. This is reflected in both its communication structure and management. Internal communication is considered informal and unstructured, and this is one of the key points of friction, as came forward during the interviews. The internal communication structure needs development, and management has pointed out that it is working on it.

The company’s management can also be described as approachable. Due to its non-hierarchical character, management is well-regarded and seen as a role model, rather than a boss. For this reason, some participants suggested that change needs to come from leadership, as it is management that holds the exemplary role.

#### *4.3.2 Clients and competition*

Other elements that are often used to describe the company’s identity, are its clients and competitors. The company has two competitors, one of which is considered its main competitor, due to it holding a larger market share. Respondents felt that although the larger company is equal to them in terms of services, it is the atmosphere and character that differentiates the two.

*“I think that they have much more a... grey atmosphere. It’s a bit dusty there.  
[...] While we are much more flexible” – Lower tier employee*

It is that same flexibility that may be the reason that the company is not larger than its main competitor: flexibility, although a key characteristic of the company, is also costly. Respondents explain that clients do not always exactly know what it is that they want, which results in situations where the company needs to improvise and be flexible. This flexibility means extra work, which results in more costs, both in terms of finances as well as time and man power.

Another difference often mentioned by our participants is the way in which both companies sell themselves. The following quote illustrates this difference:

*“Well, they tend to say ‘yes’ to any challenge. And once they get the job, that’s when they actually start looking at how they are going to do it. We are now slowly changing to that. Very slowly.” – Higher tier employee*

It seems our interviewees consider the company much more subdued, modest and careful, while the competitor does not shy away from shouting it from the rooftops.

The clients note another difference between the two companies: although both companies consist of multiple smaller companies, the clients consider the competitor to be more fragmented, while the company comes across as a unified whole. This makes the company able to provide a ‘full service’, meaning that it can facilitate video registration, to editing, to distribution, covering multiple aspects of the value chain.

The clients themselves can be roughly divided into two groups: broadcasters and production houses. Broadcasters sometimes produce their own content, while other times they will hire production houses to come up with content. For some of these productions, they need the help of another facilitatory company, which is where the company comes in. Within broadcasters there is another divide: public and commercial broadcasters. Public broadcasters are supported by government funding and are non-profit, while commercial broadcasters are privately funded and aim to make a profit. This distinction implies a greater difference between the two: public broadcasters are more likely to consider CSR efforts valuable due to their public nature, while the commercial broadcasters and production houses do not value CSR efforts. The

fact that public broadcasters do value CSR is mostly driven by their overarching, government-directed institute, who demands certain sustainability standards from these public broadcasters. Commercial broadcasters and production houses do not have an overarching institute that demands any sustainability standards. It is likely that they follow the same logic of the ‘against-group’ of employees: as long as CSR efforts do not have a direct (economic) benefit, these efforts are not valuable to them.

#### 4.3.3 *Industry*

The final element of the company’s corporate identity is the overall industry that it belongs to. The industry is described as the traditional media industry, entailing largely TV production. A defining characteristic of the industry is the ‘you ask, we deliver’ element: this suggests that when one company hires another to provide a service or product, they will deliver that service or product, and no more, no less.

*“It is quite a ‘you ask, we deliver’ kind of industry. And the margins aren’t that big. Nor are we scored based on our CSR performance.” – Higher tier employee*

This quote illustrates how the character of the industry has not allowed for many CSR efforts. This confirms and possibly explains the numbers presented in MIT Sloan Management Review (2013), which showed that the media industry is one of the least involved industries in terms of CSR.

Our interviewees are convinced that CSR and the industry do not go well together. Most could not recall any examples of CSR efforts within the industry, while some suggested that it was up and coming a few years ago, but has stopped being an issue ever since.

#### 4.3.4 *CSR expectations*

Within the company, CSR expectations were discussed in terms of more environmentally friendly trucks, a decrease in paper use, and a change to LED lamps. The latter expectation is already being fulfilled, as most light sources are switching from incandescent light bulbs to LED lamps. The company is making plans to reduce its paper use, but it does not yet seem to know how it will enforce this exactly. And the idea to have more environmentally friendly trucks seems farfetched considering the status quo. However, participants would often mention Low

Emission Zones (LEZ), and how their trucks do not live up to LEZ qualifications. Currently, trucks moving within an LEZ are required to pay a fee. This has planted the idea amongst employees that more environmentally friendly trucks might soon become a requirement, rather than a wish.

However, a recurring theme amongst interviewees, was the notion of a ‘quick win’: many interviewees were not in favor of sustainability simply based on moral principles, but rather they felt that sustainable efforts within the company should only be enforced if it also holds another, more economic benefit. The LED lamps were continuously mentioned as an example of this:

*“I have seen companies embracing LED lighting now, but mostly to solve the problems of incandescent lighting: [due to less heat from the lights] you immediately solve a problem with air-conditioning, so that has a number of perks.” – Higher tier employee*

This quote illustrates how the mindset towards sustainability currently is: sustainable efforts are supported, but only if they yield other perks as well. Our interviewees believe that if a media company is to engage in CSR, these efforts must be economically driven and in a way linked to its core business. Porter and Kramer (2007) believe the same thing: rather than doing good for the sake of doing good, companies should aim to harness CSR activities that are tied together with their core business. Porter and Kramer (2007) also refer to this as strategic CSR.

When clients were asked about their expectations in terms of CSR, they also expressed CSR in terms of environmental sustainability, and considered the option of producing environmentally friendly. Doing so, a clear divide between clients became visible: public broadcasters considered environmentally friendlier production valuable to an extent, while commercial broadcasters and production houses considered its value low to none.

*“I don’t think, looking at my clients, that if I tell them, hey, my offer this year is two percent more expensive, but because of that we are now CO2 neutral, [...], then I think that they will say, do it without the CO2 neutral option. – Client*

This quote illustrates how demand for CSR influences action of CSR: media companies prefer not to engage in CSR, unless it is demanded and pushed top-down, by clients and other institutes. This is in line with the previously discussed character of the industry itself: you ask,

we deliver.

Thus, it seems that on the individual company level there is a demand toward CSR efforts visible. However, on an industry level this demand is not as visible. This may be attributed to the fact that the value chain of this industry has very small margins of profit, as reported by some of our interviewees. These small margins have created an industry where there is little to no room for any other efforts besides those that focus on the service or product itself.

#### *4.3.5 Theme summary*

This theme illustrates the perceived corporate identity of both the individual company, the clients and its competitors, and the industry. It also highlights what the expectations are of these stakeholders with regards to CSR. Mainly, the corporate identities of these different layers correspond: the entire industry is driven by a ‘you ask, we deliver’ strategy, where products and services need to be delivered and executed in the most efficient and economical way possible. This is very much in line with the findings from the previous theme, in which we found the notion that CSR activities will only be embraced if they can provide an economic, competitive advantage.

Additionally, this theme reinforces the notion of a divide within companies in the industry: there is a group that is in support of CSR activities, while there is another group that does not consider it to hold any economically beneficial values, and thus disregards it entirely. However, this divide can be seen throughout the different layers of the industry, yet the industry itself is still guided by its classic identity that is characterized by efficiency and price competitiveness.

This identity, together with the fact that the value chain holds meager profit margins, does not create an atmosphere that will induce CSR efforts without the help of a top-down force, as is the case for many other industries (Scherer & Palazzo, 2011). Rather than relying on self-induced and self-regulated CSR, the media industry will require a top-down force that demands CSR standards across the board.

Governments have increasingly become more active in the regulation of CSR within different industries (Knudsen & Brown, 2014), and there where governments do regulate and support CSR policies, economic growth is visible (Škare & Golja, 2014). If CSR standards

become government regulated and implemented throughout the entire value chain, the media industry will find (technologically) innovative ways to incorporate CSR. However, until that time, the media industry will remain focused on its economic margins and product and service efficiency.

#### 4.3.6 Conceptual model

This chapter highlights the corporate identity of the company and its industry. In Figure 2, its interconnections are visible.

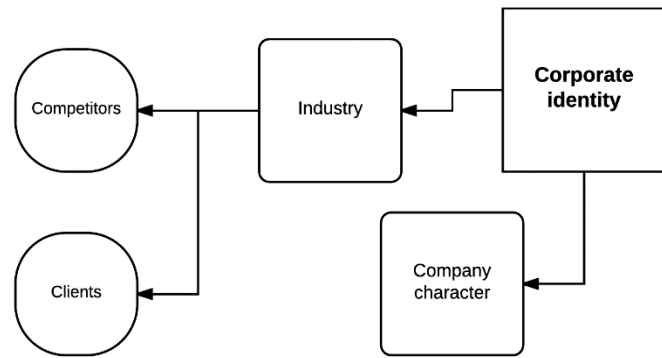


Figure 2: Conceptual model of corporate identity

The model shows how the respondents viewed the company's corporate identity: it is highly determined by the company's individual character, but the media industry, consisting of both the company's competitors and clients, also play a large role in creating the corporate identity.

When we combine Figure 1 and 2, we cannot clearly see a connection yet, as can be seen in Figure 3. The perceived CSR initiatives of competitors may be linked to the concept *competitors*, yet there are no other connections visible yet.

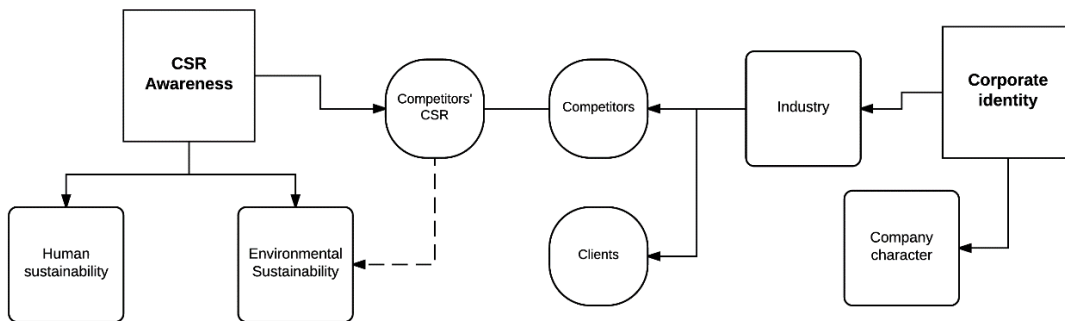


Figure 3: Conceptual model of two themes

## 4.4 Advantages and Challenges

The final theme discusses the advantages and challenges of implementing CSR efforts within the media industry, as well as general challenges. This theme consists of the sub-themes ‘*Economics*’, ‘*Tenders*’, and ‘*Sales*’. These sub-themes were the most frequently mentioned advantages and challenges pertaining to CSR. The final preliminary topic *changing business*, that was found by using the topic modeling function in Gephi (see section 4.1), corresponds to the first sub-section of this theme. The sub-section *Economics* represents the notion that the business is changing, as explained below.

### 4.4.1 Economics

A growing problem for the company is the decrease in their clients’ production budgets. Because the company operates at the end of the value chain, the profit margins are extremely small. This, combined with the decreasing production budgets, makes that the company has had to lower their price point over the past years as well. Currently, equipment fees are offered for less than the cost price, and the only seemingly profitable element of the business model is its margin over personnel.

Lower tier employees do not seem worried by this trend, mentioning that professional TV production will be required for years to come. However, higher-end employees do express their concerns and are suggesting a change in business model.

*“Of course, we need [...] to change our business model in such a way that we are no longer dependent on broadcasters. Because eventually, those parties will see their budgets decrease rapidly over the next few years. Which in turn, means that we earn less as well. So, we need to see how we can make our company more corporate.” – Higher tier employee*

This quote illustrates how the future plans for the company are determined by factors other than CSR. Changing its business model is a higher priority than implementing CSR efforts. Consequently, CSR efforts are only considered helpful if it adds any economic value. An economic value that we mentioned before is that of implementing LED lamps.

Overall, the industry is facing heavy budget cuts. These cuts have had drastic effects on the value chain, making it harder for companies to remain profitable. Unless CSR efforts can



increase profitability, it will not be valued highly.

#### 4.4.2 Tenders

To tender refers to the process where a company invites bids to take on a certain project. Within the media industry this is a common phenomenon, as public broadcasters are legally bound to review at least three bids before deciding on a party to collaborate with. Occasionally, commercial broadcasters and production houses also invite companies to participate in a tender, even though they are not bound by law.

When a company writes a tender bid, they must list the ways in which the company will meet the conditions specified in the tender. Recently, CSR has become a condition for many of these tenders.

*We live in an industry in which many tenders are being written, and in these tenders you can score points for your sustainability practice. Initially, becoming green costs money, which is something that the CFO usually doesn't like. But, if it means that we would miss some revenue, then he would like it even less. So, then we weigh the costs against the benefits, and we decide to go for the costs after all. – Higher tier employee*

This quote illustrates how seemingly CSR might find a place within the industry. However, CSR is usually only a tender condition for public broadcasters. Commercial broadcasters and production houses still consider economic factors over CSR factors.

Another aspect to this, is the perspective of the client. Interviews with clients revealed that even when they are interested in sustainability, they are unsure how much they are willing to spend more so that a production might be more environmentally friendly. The client representative who oversees the hiring of the facilitatory company, does not get to decide how much to spend on sustainability, nor is this person aware how much they can in fact spend.

To solve this issue, one of the clients suggested sending out two offers: one based on a 'normal' production, and another that is based on a more environmentally friendly production. The client representative can take both offers 'up the ranks', and let upper management decide which one they prefer.

Thus, we can see that tenders form an opportunity for CSR in the media industry. However, in this case, CSR efforts are, once again, dependent on a top-down demand.

#### *4.4.3 Sales*

The final challenge discussed by our interviewees, was the sales strategy of the company. Throughout multiple layers of the company, we found that there were many complaints regarding the sales strategy.

In order to understand why there are complaints about the sales strategy, we must understand the process that a project goes through when it comes in: when a production house wants to work with the company, they will call the sales department. This department will listen to the request and tries to understand the project's requirements. The sales department will then write out an offer to the client, and after this has been accepted, the project moves on to personnel planning and equipment planning, and finally, logistics.

The often-mentioned problem with the sales strategy, is that people within the sales department lack the technical skills to understand what is actually necessary for a project. Consequently, an offer is often incomplete, as logistics will find that many different aspects are required to get the project done.

Another aspect to the sales department, is that they need to become more of a consultancy department. We found that the client also lacks the technical skills to know exactly what is required for a production. Currently, they will demand a certain type of technology that is not relevant for their production. It is thus suggested that the sales department takes on a more consultancy role, in which they take the client by the hand and guide them in the production process.

#### *4.4.4 Theme summary*

This theme covers two challenges and a single advantage that the company is currently facing. The prime challenge of the company is that of decreasing budgets throughout the entire industry. Due to these budget cuts, companies within the industry are more focused on survival than that they are on innovations, let alone CSR innovations. However, to avoid remaining dependent on the current value chain, the company will need to adjust its business model. As the budgets decrease throughout the entire industry, this challenge does not only apply to the researched

company, but rather to all companies active within the value chain of TV production. With regards to CSR, this means that budgets first need to go up.

However, as pointed out in section 4.1 and 4.2, public broadcasters are becoming more interested in CSR efforts. As they require to open tenders for their projects and are now awarding points for CSR considerations, CSR may, over time, actually become more standardized in the industry. Research has shown that inclusion of CSR requirements in tenders has in fact increased the motivation to engage in CSR (Baden, Harwood, & Woodward, 2009). Yet, the previously mentioned challenge of cut budgets is hindering this process.

The final challenge concerns the sales department and the company's internal communication. This challenge is related only to the individual company, and cannot be generalized over the entire industry. However, this situation provides an opportunity to combine the other challenge and advantage: if a person with technological knowledge is included in the communication lines during the sales process, not only will Logistics' frustrations be decreased, their technical insights may reveal where energy and expenditure can be saved, and consequently be focused on more CSR related efforts. This process would provide economic benefits, as would it be more inclusive of CSR. As a result, more appropriate tenders may be written out, both in terms of costs, technical aspects and CSR aspects.

Overall, it can be said that the major challenge of the industry in incorporating CSR lies within economic factors. However, in solving one challenge, another may be solved as well, as explained above.

#### 4.4.5 Conceptual model

The final theme is conceptualized in Figure 4. We can see that the challenges and advantage may be divided into three sub-topics.

When the three themes are combined into a single conceptual model, we may understand their interlinkages better, as can be seen in Figure 5. This final conceptual model connects the concepts, there where we could not do so before.

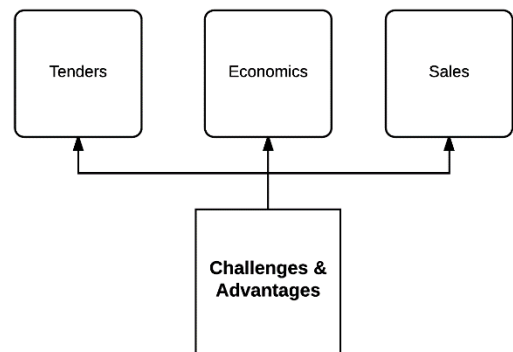


Figure 4: Conceptual model of challenges and advantages

The concept *Tenders* ties together the concepts *Clients* and *Environmental Sustainability*. This is because some of the clients are asking for environmentally sustainable practices as a requirement in tenders. If there were a real fit between the three themes, this is where it would be. However, *Economics* highlight the issue: as the industry's, and thus the company's, economic situation does not allow for CSR innovations, it cancels out any opportunity for CSR initiatives. This, in combination with the fact that only a few of the clients actually consider environmental sustainability in their tenders, gives CSR few chances.

The model also highlights the notion of top-down demand for CSR: from the concept *Corporate identity* flows the concepts *industry*, then *clients*, and finally *tenders*. This supports the idea that, if one would want the media industry to become more active in CSR initiatives, there needs to be a force pushing this down onto the industry.

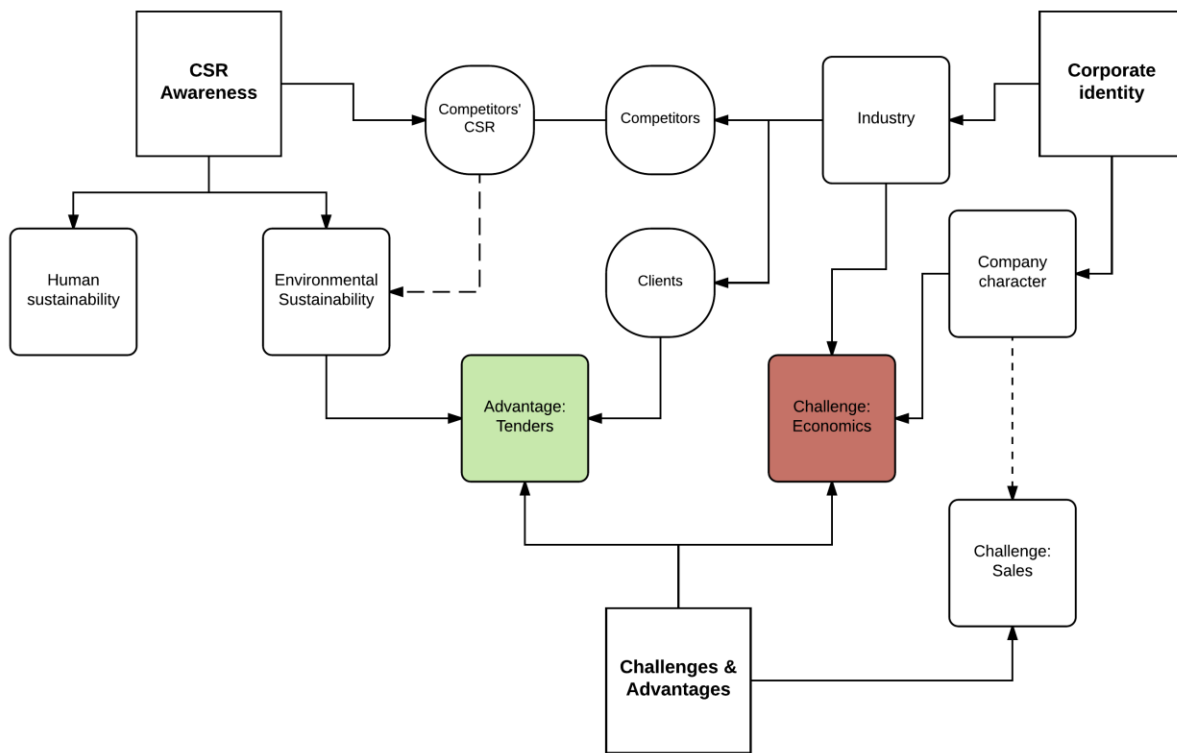


Figure 5: Final conceptual model

## 4.5 Network Analysis

Using the software *Gephi*, we visualized the themes and subthemes as found in the thematic analysis. Doing so allows us to better see the connections between different themes.

In this visualization, the three main themes are the largest bubbles, while the medium-sized bubbles represent sub-themes, and the smallest bubbles are references belonging to these sub-themes. Each of the main themes was assigned one of the primary colors (red, blue, green). This color spreads out to the related sub-themes, and diffuses with another color if there is an overlap.

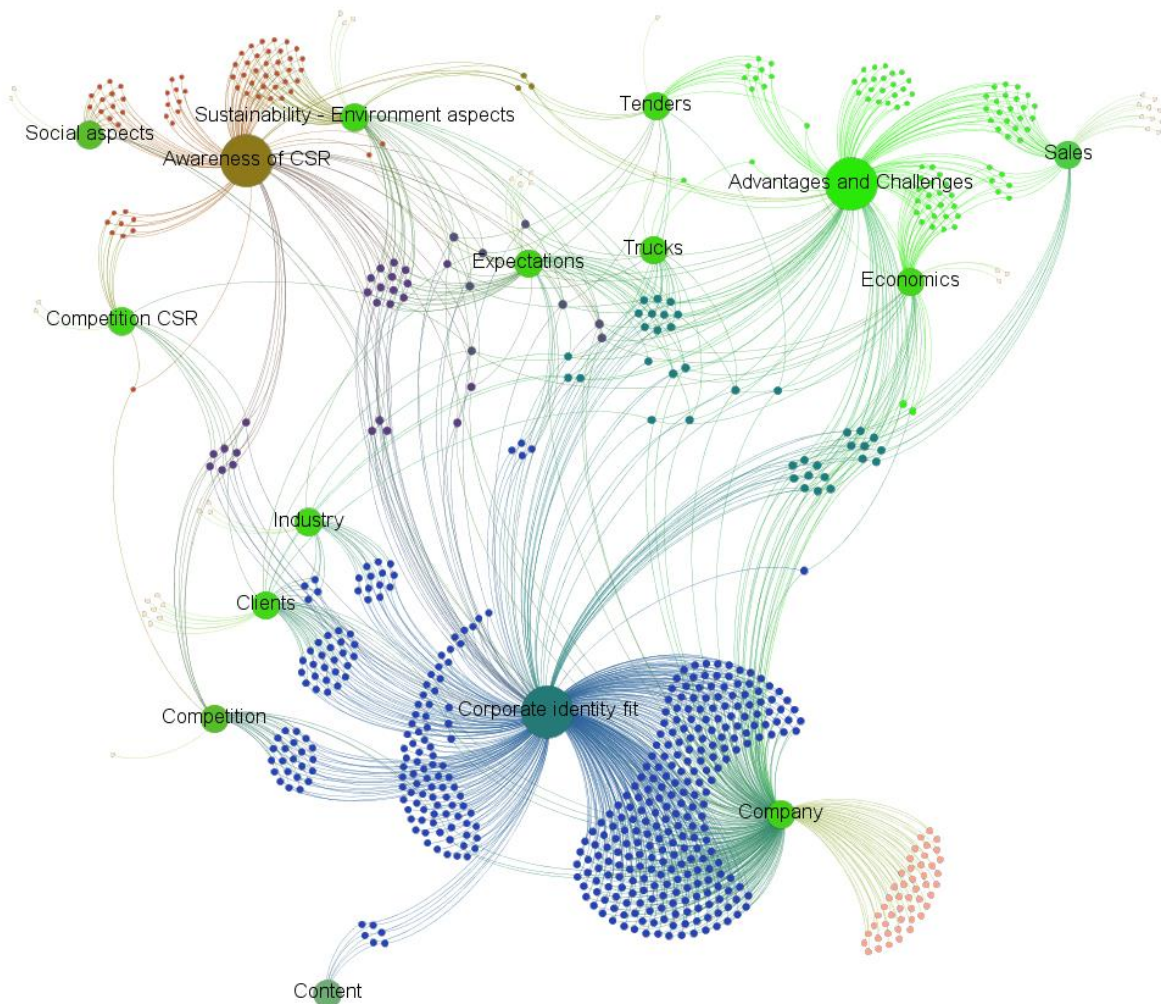


Figure 6: Visualization of themes and sub-themes

We may learn a few things from the visualization. We can see that most references pertain to the *corporate identity fit* theme. This theme also has the most lines flowing out, suggesting that it is highly related to other themes and sub-themes. For this theme, we can also see how its most relevant sub-theme is that of the *Company* itself (which refers to corporate identity factors within the company, rather than, for example, the industry), while the other three sub-themes, *Industry*, *Clients*, and *Competition*, are less relevant. However, it is important to note that the sub-theme *Competition* is closely related to the theme *Awareness of CSR*. Looking back on our thematic analysis, this can be explained based on our finding that CSR was often discussed in terms of what has already taken place within the industry by competitors of the company.

The theme *Advantages and Challenges* is surrounded by its three sub-themes. Although *Sales* is an important sub-theme, we can see that it is quite standalone. However, the sub-theme *Economics* is one that is highly connected to other sub-themes within the visualization. This supports our finding that economic factors play a large role when it comes to the perceptions towards CSR.

Central within the visualization is the sub-theme *Expectations*. This centralized position reveals that it is related to many different topics within the analysis. Our thematic analysis showed that CSR expectations are quite dispersed, showing on one side a group of employees that would like to see the industry more involved with CSR, while the industry simply has trouble making room for this concept. You can see that the expectations are strongly related to the concepts of tenders, trucks, and environmental sustainability. Yet on the other hand, the expectations are influenced by the sub-themes of *Industry* as well as *Economics*.

This visualization manages to capture the complexity of CSR perceptions within the B2B media industry. With many sub-themes related to one another, it can be seen that people do not perceive a single topic in the same way. This visualization may be interpreted as a representation of the difficulty with which CSR efforts are implemented and communicated within this industry.

## 5. Discussion

In this final chapter of the master thesis, the main research findings are summarized and in doing so, the research question is answered. Additionally, this chapter discusses the implications of this research for the research domain, as well as for industry stakeholders. This chapter is concluded by discussing the limitations of this study and suggesting steps for future research.

### 5.1 Summary

As becomes apparent from the results, some interesting findings were revealed in aiming to answer the research question, '*what determines a good fit between CSR strategies and corporate identity of B2B companies in the media industry?*'. First of all, interviewees in general revealed that CSR within the media industry is generally considered in terms of environmental sustainability. In line with suggestions by Bhattacharya and Sen (2004), companies within the media industry consider CSR issues that are relevant to its core business: its core business requires the use of large amounts of electricity, fossil fuels and other sources of energy. B2B media companies seem to realize naturally that environmental sustainability is a CSR goal that is most linear to its core business.

However, there is not a good fit between CSR strategies and the corporate identity of B2B companies in the media industry. This is not due to a lack of want: within individual companies there are bound to be groups of people who want to see more environmentally friendly business practices within the industry, yet it is the character of that same industry that is withholding the development of such practices. In line with Beverland et al. (2007) and Kahneman (2013), this specific B2B industry is completely rational when it comes to making business decisions. This rationality is driven by a number of factors that constitute the industry's character: the 'you ask, we deliver' mentality is one that is inherently linked to TV productions, and thus, to the industry. This mentality drives a strong dedication and motivation of the people working within the industry to create the best product or service, however, it leaves no wiggle room for practices that don't directly influence the product or service.

Fraj, Martínez and Matute (2013) defined two types of CSR practices within the B2B industry, market oriented and internally oriented practices. These two types seem to align with

the few reasons that support CSR efforts within the B2B media industry. Internally oriented practices within this industry is exemplified by the switch from incandescent lighting to LED lighting. Besides the fact that LED lights are more environmentally friendly, it is also more affordable, lasts longer, and gives off less warmth, which in turn reduces energy costs. Though its effect is only felt indirectly, the operationalization of the production is eventually more cost efficient.

A market oriented practice is one that can be directly seen to have a positive effect on economic performance. This can be seen in the application of project tenders: some tenders nowadays ask a bid to explain how its company enforces CSR efforts. A B2B media company engaging in environmentally friendly practices may score higher on its bid than a company that doesn't. If its practices lead to more projects, it directly influences economic performance.

However, this exemplifies a larger predicament that the industry is facing: CSR efforts are not valued on its own. They are only valued if there is either a top-down demand from a client for sustainability efforts, or if (technological) innovation produces it as a by-product. Currently, only a few parties within the media industry express a demand for sustainability, and even when they do, they are unsure how much they are willing to spend on it.

In conclusion, it must be said that we found no evidence supporting a good fit between the corporate identity of B2B media companies – and the entire industry, for that matter – and CSR efforts.

## **5.2 Implications**

### *5.2.1 Theoretical implications*

This research has shown that CSR efforts within the B2B media industry are not perceived to have the same effects as suggested by previous academic research on CSR efforts. We had anticipated that our findings would differ strongly from the perceived effects of CSR in the B2C industry, but that our findings would so strongly contradict the research on CSR within the B2B industry, we could not have anticipated.

Our research suggests that there are more industry-specific factors at play that determine



the effects of CSR and how it is perceived within the different B2B industries. Based on this, it can be argued that CSR research requires industry-specific exploration, and that conclusions drawn from a single industry type cannot be applied to another type of industry, even though they may seem similar in some regards.

### *5.2.2 Industry implications*

The research suggests that the B2B media industry is a long way from embracing CSR efforts within its operationalization. Within the industry, CSR efforts will most likely remain superficial, consisting of mostly symbolical efforts

Additionally, the research implies that there currently is no reason for the industry to become more involved with CSR, other than moral reasons. The few advantages that it may bring seem to be outweighed by the challenges it brings along.

The most predominant challenges are the decreasing budgets and the lack of top-down demand for CSR efforts. It is implied that these challenges will keep CSR from being incorporated within the industry, unless the challenges are somehow resolved. As budgets are unlikely to increase any time soon, the most apparent solution would be to instill a top-down demand. Such a demand would need to come from the very beginning of the value chain of TV production, meaning the broadcasters. However, CSR demand will not arise from within the broadcasters themselves, rather they need an external incentive. This incentive is yet to be determined, and this might be another avenue for future research.

### *5.2.3 Corporate managerial implications*

Although this research was focused on a single media company, we expect that its findings can be applied to other companies within the industry as well: all companies within the industry are faced with a changing business due to a decrease in budgets, as this change is sensed throughout the entire value chain.

The findings indicate that managers within the industry need to consider adopting their business model. The current rise in production value, but decrease in budgets will soon create a scenario where the price point will fall below the costs of production, leaving projects unprofitable. Thus, media companies will need to innovate their business model.

This research does not suggest how a company should change its business model. Rather

it addresses the opportunity for CSR within the industry. In its current form, CSR cannot provide this business model innovation, as CSR initiatives are approached as an extra aspect of business. Rather it should be incorporated in the business model and revolve around the core business of a company. When this is the case, CSR may create tangible and non-tangible benefits such as increased product demand and a stronger sense of trust amongst stakeholders (Mariadoss et al., 2011).

This does mean that CSR initiatives require a fair amount of capital investment, as turning around a business model can often be quite expensive. Management should go about carefully laying out a CSR plan, rather than diving in headfirst. For this aspect, experts in the field of CSR and business application should be brought in, and together, a strategy can be formed.

## **6. Conclusion**

### **6.1 Limitations**

This research focused extensively on the fit between an individual company's corporate identity and CSR efforts, while also considering, yet to a lesser extent, its clients' perceptions of the abovementioned elements. As the research has found that a top-down demand is what drives CSR within the industry, it would have been useful to incorporate more clients within the industry.

The research originally intended to interview five client representatives. However, due to different reasons, two of these five were either not able or unwilling to be interviewed. This left us with merely three client interviews. Two of these are public broadcasters, the other is a production house. We did approach a commercial broadcaster as well, but this representative expressed not to have the time to work on a research surrounding sustainability. His explanation was that their company does not care for sustainability, nor is it relevant for its business.

However, the scope of this research was, after all, mostly focused on the individual company's employees and their perceptions. Rather than a true limitation, the research has shown us that clients may be an interesting avenue of future research.

### **6.2 Future Research**

The sections above already mentioned two suggestions for future research. This research has found that clients and a top-down demand are the most important factors for CSR within the B2B media industry. However, several things remain unclear with respect to these elements, and may be a good starting point for future research.

First of all, the perceptions of clients were only somewhat recorded in this research. However, as they play such an important role in the enforcement of CSR efforts within the B2B media industry, it would be wise to conduct further research into their perceptions. This research may form the foundation of an investigation into the perspectives of clients on CSR efforts.

Related to the first, yet more in-depth, another avenue of research would be to take a

close look at the incentives of broadcasters to include CSR as an in the production of TV. Currently, only a few broadcasters consider it an element at all, and it would be interesting to see what motivates them. Overarching institutes to which different broadcasters may fall under, should be considered as well. These might be the national public broadcasting institutes, and even the government. Their influence over the broadcasters could be an interesting avenue of pushing CSR down the value chain.

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## 8. Appendix A

### Interview Instrument

#### Introduction

My name is Sem Oerlemans, and I am a student, studying Media & Business at Erasmus University Rotterdam. I have worked for a number of different media production companies before, one of which was Argus Productions. Through the job of Live Slow Motion Operator I became familiar with the company', and its facilities. Now, to finalize my studies, I have to write a Master Thesis. For my Master Thesis, I am researching the corporate identity of media companies, stakeholder expectations of CSR, and how these two can fit together. We will conduct research into this topic by means of interviews with clients and internal stakeholders of one such media company.

That is why I have asked you to come in today. First of all, I want to thank you for coming in and being willing to participate in this interview. I will now go over some of the rights you have as interviewee.

The interview will take about 45 minutes. During this time, you may take a break or stop the interview, if you wish to do so. Just tell that you would like a break. If you wish to discontinue the interview, then you also have that right. Additionally, you are not obliged to answer all of the questions.

For our research, we won't need any personal information, however, we will need some demographical information, such as your gender, age and profession, which we would like to mention in the research paper.

I will write a report on the findings of this research, and thus also on this interview. In this report, I might use quotes from this interview to exemplify some things. However, your name will not be mentioned. Rather, we will use an alias. Is there an alias that you would like me to use? If you don't have any, I will make one up for you later.

About the interview itself: it will be a semi-structured, in-depth interview. In simpler terms, this means that we will simply be having a conversation. I do have some questions here, but rather than you only giving an answer to a question, it should feel more like we are having a conversation. The topics that we will be discussing today are corporate identity, CSR, and your expectations of this. Also, you should understand that there is no wrong answer. I want to understand your perceptions, so this is not a test of facts.

Before we start: do you have any questions?

Finally, I would like to ask if you are ok with me recording this interview?

If you would please read the following form, and sign it if you agree (Appendix B). This is a

consent form, which states the same things that I have just told you, and you give me permission to record the interview.

I will now start recording.

#### General start

- Please state your name, age, and what your profession/function is?
- If applicable, please state the pseudonym that you would like to be used in the report of this research.
- Can you describe for me what it is that you do within your company?
  - o How long have you been with the company?

#### Corporate identity:

##### Market conditions: Nature of industry, corporate marketing strategies, competition

- Please explain to me, what is it that the company does?
  - o How would you call the overarching industry that the company belongs to?
- Who are the company's competitors?
  - o In what way do they compete with the company?
- What makes the company stand out within the industry?
- Do you think that the company has a brand image within the industry?
  - o How do you see this brand image?

##### Corporate culture: Goals, philosophies and principles, Nationality, Organizational imagery and history

- When you think of the company, what comes to mind?
  - o What do you believe the company stands for/represents?
- What is the story of the company?
  - o Is there a history to the company? What is it?
  - o How was it founded?
- The company is part of a larger, European conglomerate, but is essentially Dutch. How do you feel that this influences the company?
  - o Do you get many jobs that take place outside the Netherlands?
  - o Do you feel that the work environment is Dutch or does it have foreign influences?
    - What does this mean for you?
- Are there any company rituals/traditions/taboo's?
  - o What do you think that these mean?

- Why are those in place?
- What are some things that you like about the company?
  - Anything that you don't particularly like?

Communication and visual identity: Corporate communications, Uncontrollable communications, Architecture and location, Corporate visual identity

- In the most general terms, how does communication within the company work?
- Does upper management ever communicate to the rest of the company?
  - In what way do they usually do this?
  - How do you feel about this type of communication?
- How do you usually communicate with your peers and direct management?
  - Is it more formal or informal?
  - How do you feel about this form of communication?
- Location:
  - How do you feel about the city that the company is located in?
  - How do you feel about the campus that the company is set on?
  - How do you feel about the building that the company works from?
- Could you describe for me the logo of the company?
  - What do you think that this logo represents?
  - In what way do you feel that this represents the company?

Corporate Social Responsibility:

CSR initiatives:

- Are you familiar with the term CSR?
  - What does it mean to you?

[Explain the term CSR, regardless of the answer.]

- Is CSR important to you?
  - Which aspects?
  - Why / why not?
- Can you name some examples of CSR that you find interesting, or that you like?
  - Why do you like these specifically?
- Do you know of any CSR initiatives within the industry?
  - How do you feel about these?
- Do you know of any CSR initiatives by any of the company's competitors?
  - What was it exactly that they did?
  - How do you feel about such initiatives?
- Do you think that the company should get involved in CSR?

- What types of CSR do you think that the company should engage in?
- Why is that?

[If the participant cannot name any CSR initiatives, give examples: Mediapark sustainable energy; DutchView's sustainable OB van; the first 'green' studio.]

CSR communication: message content, message channel

- When you hear about CSR initiatives, how do you usually hear about them?
- How did you find out about CSR initiatives within the industry?
- How do you feel about the way that this is communicated?
  - What could be better?
- Do you feel as though these initiatives are genuine?
  - Why / why not?
- How do you think that CSR initiatives should be communicated?

CSR reputation:

- Do you think that CSR is an important element in the media industry?
  - If not: should it be? Why?
  - If yes: how come?
- Do you think that CSR can help a media company?
  - In what way?

General ending:

- How do you think that the company is doing right now?
  - Is it doing better than the last years, or is it having a harder time?
  - In which terms do you view this?
- Is there anything that you feel that the company should change?
  - Are there any recommendations that you want to make towards the company?

Thank you for your time and your cooperation. If you have any questions afterwards, you may always contact me. The contact details are on the consent form that you signed.

## **9. Appendix B**

### **CONSENT REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATING IN RESEARCH**

FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY, CONTACT:

Sem Oerlemans

Johan de Meesterstraat 30B, 3031SR Rotterdam

Sjoerlemans@gmail.com

06-477 69 668

#### **DESCRIPTION**

You are invited to participate in a research about corporate identity of media companies, CSR, and your expectations on these. The purpose of the study is to understand how media companies may integrate corporate citizenship in a way that is in line with their corporate identity.

Your acceptance to participate in this study means that you accept to be interviewed. In general terms, the questions of the interview will be related to how you see your company's corporate identity, and what your ideas are towards CSR.

Unless you prefer that no recordings are made, I will use my iPhone as an audio recorder for the interview.

You are always free not to answer any particular question, and/or stop participating at any point.

#### **RISKS AND BENEFITS**

As far as I can tell, there are no risks associated with participating in this research. However, the company has asked me to keep all names confidential, thus we shall not use your real name in the report. Although general information will be used, such as general position within company, age, and gender, we will not use your real name, and rather use a pseudonym.

I will use the material from the interviews and my observation exclusively for academic work,

such as further research, academic meetings and publications.

#### TIME INVOLVEMENT

Your participation in this study will take approximately 45 minutes. You may interrupt your participation at any time.

#### PAYMENTS

There will be no monetary compensation for your participation.

#### PARTICIPANTS' RIGHTS

If you have decided to accept to participate in this project, please understand your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

#### CONTACTS AND QUESTIONS

If you have questions about your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact – anonymously, if you wish – Dr. Erik Hitters of the Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication, at 010 408 2503, or [hitters@eshcc.eur.nl](mailto:hitters@eshcc.eur.nl).

#### SIGNING THE CONSENT FORM

If you sign this consent form, your signature will be the only documentation of your identity. Thus, you **DO NOT NEED** to sign this form. In order to minimize risks and protect your identity, you may prefer to consent orally. Your oral consent is sufficient.

I give consent to be audiotaped during this study:

Name

Signature

Date

Cross out whichever doesn't apply:

This copy is for the participant / researcher to keep.

## 10. Appendix C

The following image is an example of the coding structure within *NVivo*. Here you may see the theme ‘Corporate identity fit’, with its different axial codes. The axial codes ‘Expectations’ and ‘Competition’ are expanded to reveal the open codes behind them.

